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TIP, BIOSIS Sponsor Toxi-tape Workshop

The Library's Toxicology Information Program (TIP), in conjunction with Biological Abstracts' BIOSIS (BioSciences Information Service), sponsored a one-day workshop on January 12, 1971, to introduce to potential users the new "Toxi-tape" service that BIOSIS has been developing under a cost-sharing contract with TIP/NLM. It was hoped to obtain participation from the users by having them accept the pilot tape service at no charge in return for their evaluation of it.

Dr. Henry M. Kissman, Associate Director for Specialized Information Services, NLM, spoke briefly on the background of the Library's Toxicology Information Program and its involvement in the development of the Toxi-tape service. He also explained that this was only one of a number of new services being developed for users by TIP, through contracts, in-house activities, and cooperative programs with other agencies.

The Toxi-tapes are primarily concerned with industrial and pharmaceutical toxicology. Citations for the tapes are selected by computer searches of *Biological Abstracts (BA)*, and represent one year's coverage of the literature by that publication -- specifically, Volume 51, No. 8 to Volume 52, No. 6. It is planned that these citations will be distributed as quarterly tapes with the following subject area options: (a) industrial and pharmaceutical toxicology, (b) industrial toxicology only, and (c) pharmaceutical toxicology only.

The first tape was available at the time of the meeting. The other three tapes, in preparation, will contain information from *BioResearch Index* as well as *BA*.

Staff members of BIOSIS described the additional indexing being done for each Toxi-tape citation. They developed a "Toxicology Thesaurus" (Toxi-thaurus) for this purpose. Additional items of information provided on the tape include: synonyms for the name of a chemical, if it is contained in the title or the *BA* abstract; Chemical Abstracts Service Registry numbers; and Wiswesser Line Notations. To increase the retrieval of particular species, a classification system and code for taxonomy was developed, called "Taxicon."

It was explained that Toxi-tape format is in EBCDIC, an unlabeled 9-channel tape (800 bpi) in variable record length and variable block length format. Although the experimental BIOSIS Toxi-tape service originally did not include a software package, TIP arranged for a demonstration of a search program which can be used to query the Toxi-tapes. The availability (for purchase or lease) of this program would allow all users to query the tapes immediately, instead of requiring each

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user to develop or modify his own computer program. During the afternoon session, the program was demonstrated by searching the Toxi-tapes on the BIOSIS computer, using questions supplied by attendees in the morning.

Approximately 100 persons attended the meeting, representing almost 50 pharmaceutical and industrial firms, government agencies, and educational and other institutions. BIOSIS provided attendees with copies of the Toxithaurus; a list of journal sources of toxicology; Taxicon codes for species in the files; and additional material to supplement the day's presentations.

Reclassified?

One of the NLM Associates would like to hear from librarians with experience in reclassifying medical library collections to the National Library of Medicine scheme. Miss Jane S. Young hopes to gather information that will help librarians decide whether or not to reclassify; ultimately she plans also to offer guidelines for such reclassification.

Those who wish to participate in this project may write to Miss Young at the National Library of Medicine, 8600 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, Maryland 20014.

Historical Translations Program Recommended

Jeanne L. Brand, Ph.D.
Chief, International Programs Division, Extramural Programs

The Library's International Programs Division (formerly the Publications and Translations Division), which administers NLM's Special Foreign Currency Program in Israel, India, Poland, and Yugoslavia, convened an Ad Hoc Committee on Historical Translations on January 29, 1971, to assist in developing a program of translations in the history of medicine.

The Committee, which also represents the American Association for the History of Medicine, affirmed the need for NLM to assume an expanded role in sponsoring the English-language translation and publication of significant works in the history of medicine, in the history of biomedical sciences, and historical studies relating to medicine and culture, for use not only by scholars in the field, but for a wider audience in the U. S. community of physicians, health scientists, and medical students.

The Committee recommended that first priority in funding historical translations be given to translating "primary sources"--great untranslated medical classics such as

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the works of Galen, Hippocrates, Vives, and Weyer, for example -- and important medical autobiographies not heretofore translated into English. The Committee also recommended, as a second priority, the translation and publication of important "secondary sources," including major histories of medicine, nineteenth and twentieth century histories of categorical health and disease entities, studies of national patterns of medical care and of public action in preventive and curative medicine, etc. The Committee further suggested that the Library utilize special foreign currencies to reprint out-of-print classics in the history of medicine which had previously been translated into English.

Recognizing the fragility of the literature and absence of facilities to preserve important source material in many countries, the Committee recommended that NLM extend its efforts to identify and assist in preserving and reproducing important medical source materials in India, Pakistan, and other Eastern and Near Eastern countries. The Committee suggested, further, that the Library support facsimile reproduction, without translation, if necessary, of major medical classics from Sanskrit and other rare and difficult languages, for distribution to libraries and to a limited number of scholars, until such time as the studies could be translated. Recognizing that some historical studies could more appropriately be carried out in the United States, rather than in special foreign currency countries, the Committee recommended that NLM make available dollar grants, as well as Public Law 480 funding, for selective support of translations in the history of medicine.

The Committee supported present NLM distribution sales plans in the Public Law 480 program through U.S. university and commercial publishers, wherever feasible. Noting the value of collaborative efforts of U.S. and foreign scholars in the history of medicine, the Committee supported the concept of NLM's making available special foreign currencies to U.S. scholars for collaborative projects abroad.

Dr. L. L. Langley, Associate Director for Extramural Programs, chaired the Ad Hoc Committee meeting, and Dr. Jeanne L. Brand, Chief of the International Programs Division, served as Executive Secretary.

Members of the Committee included: Dr. Gert Brieger, Professor of the History of Medicine, Duke University Medical School; Dr. John Blake, Chief, History of Medicine Division, NLM; Dr. Paul Cranefield, Associate Professor, Rockefeller University; Dr. Charles Culotta, Department of Biology, Bryn Mawr College; Dr. Saul Jarcho, Editor, *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine;* Dr. Lester King, Senior Editor, *Journal of the American Medical Association;* and Dr. George Mora, Medical Director, The Astor Home for Children.

Experiments in On-Line Bibliographic Input

Approximately three years ago, the Library's Lister Hill National Center for Biomedical Communications negotiated a contract with the MIT/Lincoln Laboratory, Lexington, Massachusetts, to determine the feasibility of storing NLM's *Medical Subject Headings (MeSH)* in a computer. This would allow an indexer, or other user, to retrieve any specific part of *MeSH*, including the hierarchic structure, on-line. It was thought possible that such on-line retrieval might ultimately

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replace the printed *MeSH* for use while indexing, cataloging, or searching. Toward this goal, Lincoln Laboratory has built a data base which contains all of the existing *MeSH*, and it is now possible to search *MeSH* for alphabetical terms, on all or a fraction of the word, or to enter at a node in the hierarchic structure and look at subordinate terms.

During the subsequent two years, the contractor completed the necessary programming for display of the vocabulary on a cathode ray tube (CRT) terminal. In 1970, for actual testing, Lincoln Laboratory brought to NLM a terminal developed for the MIT Center -- an ARDS 100A unit (Advanced Retrieval Display Station) -- linked to an IBM 360/67 computer in Lexington over common-carrier telephone lines.

In June, staff of the NLM input section stored the bibliographic data for 55 journal articles. Using the vocabulary display program, indexers indexed and revised those articles on-line. An immediate benefit was that Lincoln Laboratory staff could collect statistical data on time factors involved in the use of the system. The system was found to afford better quality control, because indexers could recall their original input, using a DRC (Display Reviser's Changes) command, in order to see the revisers' actual corrections and changes.

A more recent experiment was essentially a repetition of the first, but with particular emphasis on the use of the procedure as a revision tool. This application has special importance, because some NLM indexing is done under contract by indexers outside the Library, and the capability of on-line revision might offer advantages.

More extensive experimentation to determine the actual practicability of revising and proofreading on-line, with copy input to an ARDS unit at the Library, is planned. Preliminary programming is also under way for use of the terminal in searching, and experiments have been conducted in updating *MeSH* on-line.

The project described above may be considered the experimental human engineering work that is necessary to test the use by NLM of on-line computer systems for bibliographic input.

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